

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-15 are pending in this application. Claim 4 has been canceled and its claimed subject matter has been incorporated in amended independent claim 1. Claims 1, 5 and 13 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants note that claim 4 has been indicated in the October 25, 2005 Office Action as being “objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim” but as being “allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.” (October 25, 2005 Office Action at 4). Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate all limitations of canceled claim 4 and, accordingly, claims 1-3 and 5-12 are in condition for allowance.

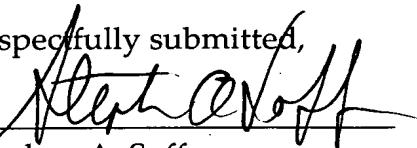
The limitations of dependent claim 4 (together with those of dependent claim 5) have been also incorporated in amended independent claim 13. Accordingly, claims 13-15 should also be allowable.

In any event, Applicants submit that neither Anctil et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,922,003) (“Anctil”) nor Veca et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,053,923) (“Veca”) discloses, teaches or suggests the subject matter of method claims 13-15. Specifically, none of the cited references discloses, teaches or suggests a “method of abrading tissue” by *inter alia* “proximating tissue to be abraded with an abrading instrument, the abrading instrument including: a bearing tube having . . . a suction port,” “an inner tube disposed within the bearing tube and having a distal suction opening,” “a solid transition region extending distally from the inner tube and disposed distal to the distal suction opening,” “a distal bearing sleeve disposed on the solid transition region,” “a proximal bearing sleeve disposed on the inner tube” and “an abrading element disposed distally on the solid transition region,” as amended independent claim 13 recites.

Allowance of all pending claims is solicited.

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